

of the long-term health of our magnificent Great Lakes—a cause that has been a primary advocacy of mine throughout my career in public service.

The people who have come here today on behalf of the Lakes have dedicated themselves to ensuring that America's greatest natural resource is able to be enjoyed for generations to come—a cause near and dear to the heart of every Michigania—and I commend them for their selfless service.

I am proud to be from the Great Lakes state of Michigan and prouder still that we have been able to do some significant work to improve conditions in these magical waters together.

Last year, Congress finally passed the Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA. WRDA authorized important projects aimed at improving the Lakes, including \$20 million to implement the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Management Plan and the construction of an electronic barrier to keep Asian carp out of the Lakes.

These are projects that I strongly support because of the benefits they will have on the health of the Great Lakes water.

While these projects are significant, much more needs to be done here in Congress to address the significant challenges facing this vital resource.

The Great Lakes are at historically low water levels which is effecting trade, tourism, and travel for everyone that uses the waters.

We are dealing with numerous invasive species—including phragmites and zebra mussels—which are having a terrible effect on the ecosystem of the lakes and the shoreline.

In fact, a new invasive species is being identified in the Great Lakes nearly every 8 months. This startling fact should prompt us all to act immediately to stop the spread of invasive species and the havoc they cause in our precious waters.

One other issue of concern is the algal blooms which we have recently seen flaring up in and around the Great Lakes. These blooms negatively impact fisheries, boating, tourism, and property values. The blooms may produce toxins which can be fatal to humans in certain cases. They are also causing botulism, which is creating a tremendous number of bird deaths. In the water, these blooms can produce “dead zones,” resulting in the demise of aquatic life. Algal blooms are particular problem on the Saginaw Bay, Lake St. Clair and the western shore of Lake Erie.

Since the Great Lakes are a national treasure they deserve the full attention of the United States Congress. The federal government must be a partner with state and local governments, as well as the Lake advocates that have invested their time and talents in improving conditions and the overall outlook of the Great Lakes.

We must work together to protect and preserve them for the future.

I was very energized last week when it was announced that the House would be considering the Coast Guard Re-authorization bill which includes tough new standards for the discharge of ballast water in the Great Lakes which will help reduce the number of invasive species entering the lakes.

I was then very disappointed to see that bill pull from the agenda because of other issues.

This House must pass this ballast water legislation as soon as possible and help to stop

invasive species from permanently damaging the fragile ecosystem in what remains wholly one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water supply.

The people of the Great Lakes States are demanding action and the time to act is now.

There is much more that we can do in addition to support the health of the Great Lakes. I will be honored to work closely with my colleagues to ensure that this national treasure is protected and preserved.

So I wish Happy Great Lakes Day to my colleagues, to those who have come to our Nation's Capitol to advocate on their behalf and everyone who shares my commitment to protecting and preserving our magnificent Great Lakes.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 930, and especially in support of Indiana Business College in Fort Wayne.

In my district, Mr. Speaker, there is a huge need for high-skilled workers, and Indiana Business College plays a critical role in helping our region meet this demand. Each year they provide thousands of students opportunities to “skill up,” so that they can better contribute to local employers and better provide for their families.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the top 20 fastest-growing occupations in our country are supplied by career and technical education. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports that nearly three-quarters of employers struggle to hire qualified workers. Clearly the need for career and technical education is severe, and we in Congress must do what we can to encourage its growth.

In Northeast Indiana—as in the rest of the country—a high quality education is critical to obtaining a good, well-paying job. While Northeast Indiana is still a manufacturing center of the country, these jobs are becoming increasingly more high-tech and require higher levels of skills and training. Schools like Indiana Business College are helping prepare students for these changes.

Mr. Speaker, as competition in our global economy continues to grow more fierce, career and technical education is essential to preparing a well-educated, skilled workforce. I ask that my colleagues join with me in expressing support for Indiana Business College and schools like it. They are critical to the future of Northeast Indiana, and they are critical to the future of our country.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL PEACE CORPS WEEK

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of National Peace Corps Week, in

honor of the 47th anniversary of the Peace Corps on March 1, 2008.

Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 190,000 Peace Corps volunteers have served their country in 139 developing nations around the globe. Their undying efforts for the cause of peace are commendable and have made a lasting impact on the communities in which they have lived and worked.

Peace Corps volunteers range from recent college graduates to retirees with several decades of work experience, and represent the tremendous diversity of the American people. The issues they address cover HIV/AIDS education and outreach, environmental protection, and improving information technology in developing nations.

Three individuals from my congressional district in Brooklyn are presently serving as Peace Corps volunteers. Kimberly Joyce has been serving in Belize since the summer of 2006; Jame McCray has been serving in Samoa since the summer of 2006; and Caitlin Parish has been serving in Tanzania since the summer of 2007. Their tireless efforts for the greater cause of peace will profoundly affect these communities. I would like to applaud and commend these outstanding Brooklynites for committing themselves to such a worthwhile cause. They are role models for us all.

INTRODUCING A BILL TO AMEND THE FEDERAL MEAT INSPEC- TION ACT AND THE POULTRY PRODUCTS INSPECTION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 28, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Unsafe Meat and Poultry Recall Act of 2008, a bill to amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and grant the Secretary of Agriculture the power to order the recall of meat and poultry that is adulterated, misbranded, or otherwise unsafe.

The USDA announcement last week requesting a recall of 143 million pounds of beef from a slaughterhouse that is being investigated for unsafe practices makes clear the importance of bolstering the ability of the USDA to keep citizens safe from tainted meat products. In this instance, like most, the recalled beef had been distributed throughout the country, including to my State of New Mexico where the United States Department of Agriculture's Commodity Foods Program had sent 3,000 cases of the questionable beef to the state's Human Services Department to be distributed to school lunch programs.

It is imperative to the health and welfare of the American public that we bolster the regulation of the meat and poultry industry. The number of people affected annually from ingesting tainted meat and poultry products illuminates this proposition: 5,000 people die from food-borne illnesses each year. Furthermore, nearly 76 million people get sick annually from eating tainted food, of which 325,000 require hospitalization. In 2007 alone, there were 91 major food recalls.

The Jack in the Box E. coli outbreak of 1993 prompted the imposition of a new regulatory system on the meat and poultry industry